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U.S. MAY SUSPEND H-1B VISA AS UNEMPLOYMENT BITES

The White House said President Donald Trump is considering a range of options to protect the jobs of American workers

SUSPENSION COULD STRETCH INTO OCTOBER

The proposed action, if implemented, would restrict only the new H-1B holders from coming to the US for work, *The Wall Street Journal* reported on Friday citing senior administration officials. Those already in the country are unlikely to be affected. The suspension could stretch into the government's new fiscal year beginning on October 1, the daily reported

BUSINESSES WARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

- Apart from H-1B, H-2B visa for seasonal workers and the J-1 visa for short-term workers could also be suspended
- In a letter to Trump, the CEO of the US Chambers of Commerce sought assurances that the proposed actions won't lead to a talent shortage when the US economy begins its recovery phase

4.4 crore
U.S. WORKERS HAVE FILED FOR JOBLESS BENEFITS SINCE MARCH

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Delhi situation horrendous and pathetic, says SC

Top court issues suo-motu notices to Delhi, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu

KANU SARDA @New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Friday called patient care during the Covid-19 pandemic in Delhi as "horrendous" and "pathetic" and asked the Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi government to explain the rationale behind reducing testing when the number of cases is shooting up.

The SC also reprimanded Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and West Bengal for not handling the crisis well and observed Covid-19 patients were treated "worse than animals". It issued notices to their chief secretaries with a directive to bring on record relevant statistics on patient management system, number of patients, availability of beds, and doctors, among others.

The bench comprising Justices Ashok Bhushan, Sanjay K Kaul and M R Shah was hearing a suo motu matter on treatment of Covid-19 patients in state-run hospitals and handling of dead bodies, when it took a grim view of the situation in Delhi.

"The large number of beds in the Government Covid Hospital being vacant in a situation where patients suspected of Covid-19 are running from pillar to post to get admission in any hospital tells about the mismanagement and sorry state of government hospitals in Delhi. The state is not only duty-bound to increase the number of beds, but also to provide appropriate infrastructure and staff for manning the Covid-19 patients," the bench stated in its order.

Coming down hard on the Delhi government, the bench said, "This is a very sorry state of affairs. There is no adherence to the Central Government's guidelines either. Hospitals are not giving due care to the dead bodies," the bench recorded in its order.

When Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said that showing no respect to a dead body is also an offence under the Indian Penal Code, the bench asked him, as well as the Delhi government counsel, "What have you done despite knowing all this? Patients are crying in pain and there is nobody to attend to them. One video from LNJP Hospital showed how badly the dead bodies are being treated. There is absolutely no respect for dead bodies too."

The bench noted that more than 2,500 beds are vacant in the Delhi Government's hospitals because nobody wants to go there. The court also sought response from the Central Government and LNJP Hospital on these issues. The matter will be heard again on Wednesday.

YOUR NEWSPAPER IS TOTALLY SAFE

WHY NOT TEST MORE, ASKS COURT

The number of samples tested in Delhi was 6,018 on May 27, but it slipped to 5,077 on June 11, while Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu tested 16,000 and 17,675 samples, respectively. Noting that non-testing of patients is not a solution, the SC asked the Delhi Government to increase testing by government hospitals and private laboratories

NATIONWIDE

CURED/RECOVERED
1,47,194

ACTIVE CASES
1,41,842

DEATHS
8,498

The test-positivity rate in Delhi is now 23, the highest in the country, meaning for every 100 tests done, 23 turn out to be positive

11,000 Cases in a day; India's Covid tally overtakes UK's, now 4th in world

SUMI SUKANYA DUTTA @New Delhi

FOR the first time, India reported more than 10,000 Covid-19 cases in a single day, on Friday. As many as 10,956 fresh cases — 44 short of 11,000 — were reported in the 24-hour period till Friday morning. There were also a record 396 deaths during the period.

The total number of cases in the country now stands at 2.97 lakh. As many as 8,498 people have lost their lives to the infection. On the positive side, over 1.47 lakh people have recovered from Covid-19.

With Friday's new cases, India's case count has surpassed that of the UK to become the fourth-highest in the world. Only the US, Brazil and Russia are ahead of India, according to the global dashboard maintained by the US's Johns Hopkins University.

The high number of cases being reported is despite India lagging far behind other worst-hit countries in terms of testing. India's testing rate stands at 3,889 per million people. In contrast, the US's testing rate is 70,256 per million.

"If we test more, we will find 10-20 times or maybe an even higher infection size. India needs to aggressively ramp up its testing capacity," said Dr Arvinder Singh Soin, researcher and a senior doctor at Medanta hospital in Gurugram.

Maharashtra reported 3,607 new cases and 152 deaths on Friday. Delhi saw 1,877 cases and 101 more deaths — the highest single-day toll for the UT. Maharashtra — the state with the highest case burden — now has a whopping 97,648 cases.

With curbs on travel, the tourism sector in the state faced losses of Rs 15,000 crore in the past three months | EXPRESS

3 LAKH JOBS IN TOURISM SECTOR MAY BE AT STAKE

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @Bengaluru

AT least three lakh people, who directly and indirectly depend on the tourism sector for their livelihood, could lose their jobs due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The situation is so bad that the State Government is now stressing on survival of the sector rather than thinking about its revival, Tourism Minister C T Ravi told *The New Indian Express*. Experts and stakeholders too feel that it may take at least six months, or even more, to get back to normal.

On Friday, CM B S Yediyurappa held a review meeting with the Tourism Department officials where he was told that the sector has faced losses of Rs 15,000 crore in the last three months and about three lakh people are in fear of losing jobs. The Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation and the state-run Jungle Lodges and Resorts have suffered Rs 14 crore and Rs 15 crore losses, respectively in the last three months.

According to department officials, the sector contributed 15 per cent to the state's GDP in the 2019-20 fiscal.

Minister Ravi told *TNIE* that there are at least 35 lakh people directly and indirectly employed in the tourism sector including in hotels, transport and other ventures. "With no business, employers are forced to lay off their staff," Ravi said.

The government is now looking at how these business can survive for longer. P7

State may see cases spike by mid-August: Sudhakar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Ballari

MEDICAL Education Minister Dr K Sudhakar on Friday said that an expert committee report has indicated that the number of Covid-19 cases in the state could rise sharply after mid-August. However, the government is prepared to face the situation, he stressed.

Speaking to reporters after visiting VIMS Hospital here, Sudhakar said that people must not panic, but follow instructions of the government and stay safe. "Currently, about 95 per cent of Covid-19 patients are asymptomatic and only 3 per cent have fever, cough and other illnesses. The number of patients being discharged is higher than the active cases," he pointed out.

The minister added that Karnataka presently has 6,516 positive cases, of which 3,440 have been cured and discharged. He also tweeted, "Nearly 60% of total Covid-19 cases in India are found in 10 cities. Despite being 4th most populous, Bengaluru has been successful in containing spread of virus. I urge people to keep up the fight, continue vigil & together with #CoronaWarriors we can defeat the virus."

The minister said that Covid-19 testing facilities will be enhanced in the district, and that the administration is working to allay fears among the people regarding the JSW cluster. Ballari will also have a trauma care unit soon, at a cost of Rs 150 crore. It is expected to be inaugurated by Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on July 15, he added. P4

K'TAKA COVID-19 BATTLE

271
Test Positive on Friday

6,516
Total Cases as on Friday

3,440
Total Recoveries so far

79
Deaths

EXPRESS READ

SC: Can't afford to have 'dissatisfied soldiers' in war

New Delhi: Taking serious note of instances of non-payment of salary to doctors treating patients suffering from Covid-19, the Supreme Court on Friday said that the country cannot afford to have 'dissatisfied soldiers' in the war against the pandemic, and asked the authorities to go the extra mile in raising funds for them. P10

Interest on late filing of GST returns halved

New Delhi: In a relief to small taxpayers with turnover up to Rs 5 crore, the GST Council on Friday halved the interest on delayed filing of GST returns for February, March and April to 9 per cent, provided the returns are filed by September 2020. Also, deadline to file returns for May, June and July is extended till September, with no interest or late fee. P12

SOUR TIES

INDIAN KILLED IN FIRING BY NEPAL FORCES NEAR BORDER

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @New Delhi

ONE Indian national was killed and three others were injured on Friday, when Nepal's security forces opened fire at a group of Indians at the India-Nepal border along Bihar's Sitamarhi district.

The Director-General of the Sashastra Seema Bal, a Central police force guarding India's border with Nepal, Rajesh Chandra said the incident happened in Nepal's territory, and at least 15 rounds were fired.

"The incident happened deep inside Nepal (around 1.5 kilometers inside) and was a local issue triggered by an altercation. It is not something that was brewing for a long time," Chandra said.

But the shooting comes amid rising tensions between India and Nepal over a plan by the Nepalese Government to include disputed territories — Lipulekh, Limiyadhura and Kalapani — in the new political map.

Residents of the Janakinagar village in Sitamarhi's Sonabarsa border area said the firing took place in the early hours of Friday, when a group of Indians went to work at a field in Narayanpur, which is now claimed to be a part of the Himalayan nation, if one goes by their new political map.

The firing reportedly happened amid an altercation between Indian workers and Nepali forces, who objected to their presence in the area.

The deceased has been identified as Vikesh Yadav, 25, son of Nageshwar Rai of Jankinagar. Uday Thakur, 35, Umesh Ram, 40, and Shivdayal Rai, 45, are the three injured. They are undergoing treatment at a private clinic in Sitamarhi, the Superintendent of Police of Sitamarhi district Anil Kumar said.

The Sitamarhi SP claimed that the police force has been deployed and the situation was under control from both sides.

They tried to snatch our weapons: Nepal

Nepal officials said a group of workers from India tried to snatch weapons from Nepali officials during an altercation, which led to the firing. Police on the Indian side said this claim is being investigated

STUDY TIME

Parents want online classes for kids, 17k sign petition

IFFATH FATHIMA @Bengaluru

JUST days after Primary and Secondary Education Minister S Suresh Kumar announced that no online classes will be conducted for students of Classes 1 to 5, an online petition, "We support online classes", is gaining traction and already has 17,000 signatures of parents of pre-primary and primary schoolchildren.

The campaign is opposed to Minister Suresh Kumar's Wednesday's announcement that schools will have to stop online classes for children in LKG/UKG and those in Classes 1 to 5 in recorded or any other form until a newly-formed 11-member committee takes a decision on it.

The parents in support of online classes point out that it helps kids stay focused on studies without whiling away their time or playing addictive video games in the absence of regular classes, even as parents are working from home. This despite experts earlier pointing out that online classes can affect motor and social skills in young children.

Software engineer Ritu Sarma, mother of a Class 3 student in a private school in Whitefield, said, "The classes were just for four hours and my daughter enjoyed attending it. The module the school had developed was very good and less burdensome as well. It was not just classes, they even had dance and musical sessions which kept my child engaged and energetic. Now, with it being stopped, she is not happy and we are disappointed as well." P5

> We haven't said no to use of technology, but have said no to online class for the time being. The children can be engaged through mass media watching educational stuff, listening to rhymes or on their class topics. We had got complaints where children had to sit in uniform for the online classes and it wasn't a good idea.
>
> VP Niranjanaradhya, Academic expert

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